

CLAIMS

1. A method of treating a mammal having an immunological renal disorder, comprising administering to the mammal an effective amount of a composition comprising an inhibitor of the LT pathway, thereby treating the mammal.
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2. The method of claim 1, wherein the disorder is selected from the group consisting of systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjogren's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, chronic hepatitis, Henoch-Schonlein purpura, and IgA nephropathy.
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3. The method of claim 1, wherein the disorder IgA nephropathy.
4. The method of claim 1, wherein the mammal is human.
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5. The method of claim 1, wherein the inhibitor is a LTBR antibody or a LT antibody.
6. The method of claim 1, wherein the inhibitor comprises a polypeptide.
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7. The method of claim 6, wherein the polypeptide comprises the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1, or a portion thereof.
8. The method of claim 6, wherein the polypeptide comprises:
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 (a) the amino acid sequence of SEQ ID NO:1; or
 (b) an amino acid sequence encoded by a nucleic acid that is at least 100, 200, 300, 400, or 500 nucleotides long and hybridizes to the nucleic acid encoding (a) under defined conditions; and wherein the polypeptide inhibits immunoglobulin secretion by B cells.
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9. The method of claim 8, wherein the defined conditions comprise pretreating for 8 hours at 65°C in a solution comprising 6 x SSC, 50 mM Tris-HCl (pH 7.5), 1 mM EDTA, 0.02% PVP, 0.02% Ficoll, 0.02% BSA, and 500 µg/ml denatured

salmon sperm DNA; hybridizing for 48 hours at 65°C; and washing for 1 hour at 37°C in a solution comprising 2 x SSC, 0.01% PVP, 0.01% Ficoll, and 0.01% BSA and for 45 minutes at 50°C in a solution comprising 0.1 x SSC.

- 5 10. The method of claim 8, wherein the polypeptide further comprises a Fc fragment of IgG1 or a Fc fragment of IgG4.
- 10 11. The method of claim 1, wherein the inhibitor comprises a soluble LTBR fused to one or more heterologous protein domains.
- 15 12. The method of claims 11, wherein the soluble LTBR comprises a ligand binding domain that can selectively bind to a lymphotoxin (LT) ligand comprising at least one LT beta subunit.
- 20 13. The method of claims 11, wherein the soluble LTBR comprises an extracellular domain of LT-beta-R.
- 25 14. The method of claims 11, wherein the soluble LTBR is human LT-beta-R.
- 30 15. The method of claim 11, wherein the heterologous protein domain comprises a human immunoglobulin Fc domain.
16. A method of treating a subject with glomerulonephritis, comprising administering to the subject an effective amount of a composition comprising an inhibitor of the LT pathway, thereby treating the glomerulonephritis.
17. The method of claim 16, wherein the glomerulonephritis is associated with a disorder selected from the group consisting of systemic lupus erythematosus, Sjogren's syndrome, rheumatoid arthritis, insulin dependent diabetes mellitus, chronic hepatitis, Henoch-Schonlein purpura, and IgA nephropathy
18. The method of claims 16 or 17, wherein the inhibitor comprises a soluble LTBR fused to one or more heterologous protein domains.

19. The method of claims 16 or 17, wherein the inhibitor comprises a soluble LTBR comprising a functional sequence of amino acids selected from the amino acids of SEQ ID NO: 1.
- 5 20. The method of claims 16 or 17, wherein the soluble LTBR comprises a ligand binding domain that can selectively bind to a surface lymphotoxin (LT) ligand comprising at least one LT beta subunit.
- 10 21. The method of claims 16 or 17, wherein the soluble LTBR comprises an extracellular domain of LT-beta-R.
22. The method of claims 16 or 17, wherein the soluble LTBR is human LT-beta-R.
- 15 23. The method of claim 18, wherein the heterologous protein domain comprises a human immunoglobulin Fc domain.
- 20 24. A method of evaluating the efficacy of a compound for treatment of IgA nephropathy, comprising: administering the compound to a BAFF-transgenic animal; and determining the test level of IgA deposits in a kidney of the animal after administration; and comparing the level with a threshold level, wherein a test level lower than the threshold level indicates that the compound is efficacious.
25. The method of claim 24, wherein the animal is a rodent.

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